

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BORDEA 00070 041425Z
ACTION EUR-12

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UNCLAS BORDEAUX 0070

E.O.: N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: ELECTION OF CHABAN-DELMAS, RPR, AS PRESIDENT OF THE
FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

SUMMARY: CHABAN HAS BEEN LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A NATIONAL
POLITICAL COMEBACK FOR THE PAST YEAR. HE HAS MENDED HIS FENCES
WITHIN THE MAJORITY, DEVELOPED HIS OPENING TO THE LEFT AND WON
THE COOPERATION OF SOME SOCIALISTS. LOCAL OBSERVERS EXPECT
HIM TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE ON BEHALF OF GISCARD S POLICIES
AND REFORMS IN HIS NEW POSITION. END SUMMARY

IN ECLIPSE ON THE FRENCH NATIONAL SCENE SINCE HIS RESIGNATION
AS PRIME MINISTER IN 1972 AND HIS DEFEAT IN THE FIRST ROUND
OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN 1974, BORDEAUX MAYOR JACQUES
CHABAN-DELMAS HAS CONTINUED TO PLAY A STARRING ROLE IN THE
SOUTH WEST. HE WAS REELECTED MAYOR IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THE
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS OF 1977 AND WAS ALSO A FIRST ROUND VICTOR
IN THE 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. MORE SURPRISING, HOWEVER,
WERE HIS WINNING OF THE LONG BATTLE TO OBTAIN EQUAL REPRESENTA-
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PAGE 02 BORDEA 00070 041425Z

TION FOR THE MAJORITY IN THE COUNCIL OF THE BORDEAUX
METROPOLITAN AREA (COMMUNAUTE URBAINE) AFTER THE LEFT HAD
CAPTURED A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE AREA S COMMUNES IN THE 1977
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, AND HIS RECENT, AND UNEXPECTED, REELECTION
AS PRESIDENT OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF AQUITAINE IN WHICH THE
LEFT HOLDS A MAJORITY OF THE SEATS.

CONGEN BORDEAUX HAS REPORTED REPEATEDLY OVER THE PAST 9 MONTHS THAT CHABAN APPEARED TO BE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A NATIONAL POLITICAL COMEBACK. THIS EFFORT HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY EVIDENT DURING THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. IT HAS FEATURED SUCH ITEMS AS HIS RECONCILIATION WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD, INCLUDING HIS OCTOBER 1977 TRIP TO ISRAEL ON THE PRESIDENT S BEHALF AND HIS PRESENCE AT THE PRESIDENT S SIDE AT THE JANUARY 16 ELYSEE LUNCHEON OF THE MAJORITY. CHABAN S ELECTION-TIME RECONCILIATION WITH CHIRAC AND HIS SPEECH AT THE MARCH 1 RALLY FOR BARRE WERE ALSO IMPORTANT ITEMS IN THIS EFFORT.

OVER THE PAST YEAR, CHABAN HAS CONCENTRATED UPON MENDING HIS FENCES WITHIN THE RPR, COOPERATING WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE MAJORITY AND DEVELOPING HIS OPENING TO THE LEFT. HE HAS WON THE COOPERATION OF SOME MODERATE SOCIALISTS IN BOTH THE BORDEAUX METROPOLITAN AREA COUNCIL AND THE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF AQUITAINE.

CHABAN WORKED HARD ON BEHALF OF A NUMBER OF RPR CANDIDATES OF THE SOUTH-WEST DURING THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS.

LOCAL COMMENTATORS EXPECT CHABAN TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE, MAINLY ON BEHALF OF THE POLICIES OF GISCARD, AS PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THEY ALSO BELIEVE THAT HE CAN INFLUENCE GISCARD AND THAT HIS ACTIVITY WILL CONTINUE TO MANIFEST HIS OWN DISTINCTIVE CACHET. HE WILL NOT FORGET HIS CONCEPT OF " A NEW UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BORDEA 00070 041425Z

SOCIETY".

THERE HAS BEEN SOME LOCAL CONCERN OVER CHABAN S HEALTH DURING THE PAST YEAR, BUT THIS HAS NOT BEEN BASED UPON ANY HARD EVIDENCE.MARVIN

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